

Winter Driving Safety Tips – Just a friendly reminder from your Durham VA Police



Slow down and relax

Keep yourself and your family safe by following these winter driving safety tips:

Driving in the winter means changes in the way you drive. Snow, sleet and ice can lead to slower traffic, hazardous road conditions and unforeseen dangers. Just **slow down** and relax. This is the most important rule to driving in bad snowy conditions. You want to do everything more slowly and more lightly than you normally would. Hitting your gas pedal, clamping your brakes or cranking your steering wheel too quickly is a surefire way to lose traction on an icy or wet road. We would like to remind all employees to plan accordingly and allow enough time to safely make it to work on time.

Prepare your vehicle for the upcoming snowy and icy weather conditions

Have your vehicle serviced regularly (check the owner's manual for the recommended interval) to ensure better gas mileage, quicker starts, faster response on pick-up and passing power, and to prevent major problems. You need to check the concentration level of the antifreeze in your vehicle's engine. This is done by using an antifreeze tester which is inserted into the water reservoir of your car. Do not open the radiator cap! Add a stronger windshield cleaning/de-icer fluid solution to keep the spray from freezing. (It is best to use a product that has a cleaner as well. This allows you to dislodge the road grime from the windshield.) Check air pressure in your tires (including the spare) and replace any worn tires. (Having proper wheel alignment will lead to a longer life for your tires).

Vehicle Checklist for Winter Weather

Before winter starts, check these in your vehicle:

Heater and windshield defroster, battery, brakes, lights and emergency flashers, tires, fuel, oil, radiator and power steering fluid. Keep your fuel tank full or near full to avoid being caught on the road in long lines of slow moving traffic. (This also is a reserve to be able to run the engine and heater if you become stranded). Always carry an emergency kit in your vehicle.

Vehicle Emergency Kit

An emergency situation on the road can arise at any time. Be prepared with a "survival kit" that should always remain in the vehicle. We suggest that your kit include:

Working flashlight and extra batteries, a First aid kit, a properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and the jack designed for your vehicle, jumper cables and a toolkit, **blanket, warm clothes**, hat and gloves, a bag of salt, sand or non-clumping kitty litter to use for added traction when a tire is stuck, extra washer fluid, ice scraper, snow brush and shovel.

It's very important to have a working cell phone with emergency contacts saved.

Non-perishable, high energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits and hard candy. Try to keep your gas tank full or almost full in the winter months.

If You Become Stranded

Do not leave your vehicle unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help and are certain you will improve your situation. To attract attention, hang a brightly colored cloth from your antenna. If you are sure the vehicle's exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes every hour or so depending on the amount of gas in the tank. Protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia; use blankets to keep warm. Keep at least one window open slightly as heavy snow and ice can seal a vehicle shut. Remain calm until emergency assistance arrives.

References:

- National Safety Council
- National Weather Service